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Edwin Wilson Had a Stack Of Hit Lists

The murky world of ex-CIA agent Edwin P. Wilson was one of constant intrigue and murder for hire. His indictment for plotting murders in prison isn't his first encounter with assassination.

According to my own lengthy investigation of Wilson, he ordered the liquidation of at least a dozen erstwhile associates, including his former business partner, Frank Terpil, an ex-CIA man and a flamboyant cut-throat in his own right. "Hit" lists traced to Wilson also included one of my reporters and former president Jimmy Carter's rambunctious kid brother, Billy.

Since being tricked into the U.S. marshals' clutches from his Libyan hideout, Wilson has been convicted of smuggling arms and explosives to Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi. He is now on trial for another explosives incident. He also faces charges that he offered \$1 million for the murder of a Libyan dissident and \$1.2 million for the murder of two federal prosecutors and six former associates who testified against him.

My associate Dale Van Atta, whose name was on one Wilson hit list, located the man who was sup-

posed to rub out Billy Carter. The killing, intended to punish Billy for reneging on a deal with Qaddafi, was to have been accomplished by sending the presidential brother a literally explosive oil painting.

Another Wilson enforcer has come forward and traced his ex-boss' assassination orders back to 1975. He asked that his identity be protected, so I'll just call him Hit Man.

He was hired by Wilson to investigate three employees who disappeared with some important files. Wilson found dozens of canceled checks indicating embezzlement, and told Hit Man: "Take care of the files, and then I want the S.O.B. dead." He was referring to the ringleader, an elderly man.

So the hired gun, armed with a .38 and accompanied by a sidekick carrying a lead pipe, waited outside the ringleader's Virginia apartment. But the assassins chickened out at the last minute, went to a bar and got thoroughly drunk.

Hit Man lied to Wilson the next day, telling him they had been unable to find the old man. He subsequently stalled Wilson until the kill order was forgotten.

Hit Man's next target was Douglas Schlachter, whom Wilson once treated like a son, but who apparently got too big for his britches. As Hit Man remembered it, Schlachter decided to "ease out of the operation." Schlachter and a former high CIA official began "talking openly

about murdering Ed and taking over."

Hit Man added: "Because I was the one that Ed trusted the most, they wanted me to call him in London and lure him back home so that we could kill him."

Hit Man put through the call, arranged to meet Wilson at Dulles Airport—and promptly told him all about the plot. Wilson, he said, handed him a wad of cash, appointed him his bodyguard and said, "If any of those [expletive deleted] even looks like he's going to do me harm, I want you to blow him away."

Wilson then set up a meeting with Schlachter at a restaurant in downtown Washington. Hit Man's orders were to wait outside; if the conversation didn't go well, Wilson would signal Hit Man as they emerged from the restaurant.

But when they came out on the street, Wilson glanced in Hit Man's direction and shook his head no.

Wilson next became disenchanted with Terpil, a friend from CIA days, who had been the original contact with Qaddafi.

Wilson told Hit Man to kill Terpil—and for once Wilson would be in on it himself. Hit Man followed Wilson and Terpil as they drove toward Terpil's home near CIA headquarters in Langley, Va. But their car got a flat tire, and Wilson managed to signal the trailing assassin to keep going, that the hit was off. Wilson never reissued the order.